

# Neighborhood Networks

## *Special Event Planning Guide*



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Office of Multifamily Housing Programs

[www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org)  
(888) 312-2743



# **Special Event Planning Guide**



This publication was developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to assist in the planning and development of Neighborhood Networks centers.

The guides in this series offer “how to” information on starting a center, creating programs and identifying center partners, marketing and media outreach, sustainability, funding, and much more.

These newly updated guides feature new contacts, resources, case studies, and helpful information. Neighborhood Networks is a community-based initiative established by HUD in 1995. Since then, more than 1,000 centers have opened throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. These community learning centers provide residents of HUD insured and assisted properties with programs, activities, and training promoting economic self-sufficiency.

This guide was printed in 2004.

To receive copies of this publication or any others in the series, contact:

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All publications are available from the Neighborhood Networks Web site at [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org).



# ***Table of Contents***

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>First Things First: Deciding on a Special Event .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Steps to Planning a Successful Event .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Quick and Easy Publicity Campaign.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Media and Event Checklist .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Sample Documents .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Sample News Release .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Sample Media Advisory .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Sample Public Service Announcements (PSAs) .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Sample Proclamation .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Sample Event Invitation .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Neighborhood Networks Information.....</b>	<b>19</b>





# ***Special Event Planning Guide for Neighborhood Networks Centers***

## **Introduction**

This guide is designed to help you plan special events for your center. It provides ideas and common sense advice.

## **Why Plan a Special Event?**

Special events serve many purposes. An event presents a center with an opportunity to:

- Raise public awareness about its programs, services, and accomplishments;
- Acknowledge the contributions of its partners;
- Attract new center users; and
- Raise funds.

The scope of a special event is limited only by one's imagination and resources. Just as every Neighborhood Networks center is different, so are the events they hold different.

This guide covers the event planning process. The first section, First Things First: Deciding on a Special Event, outlines the potential benefits of events, the types of occasions that merit events, who to call for advice, and specific ideas.

Once you have decided to hold an event, turn to the second section, Steps to Planning a Successful Event. This covers the planning process and provides solid advice on various considerations as event planning moves ahead. It also gives two optional planning lists—one short term and one long term.

The third section, The Quick and Easy Publicity Campaign, provides basic information on inviting and working with local media as part of an event. Media coverage builds great visibility for a center's work and is a way to publicly acknowledge the contributions of partners.

The Media and Event Checklist is a useful tool to keep event planners on track from start to finish.

The Sample Documents section includes samples of several documents you may want to use as part of event planning.

### **Not Planning an Event? Take a Look Anyway!**

Even if you are not thinking about holding an event, you may want to peruse this guide anyway. It will stimulate your creative juices and may spur you to plan an event.

### **Get the Book on Media Relations!**

For indepth information on media relations, see the *Media Relations Guide for Neighborhood Networks Grand Openings*, which you can order by calling the Neighborhood Networks Information Center toll-free at (888) 312-2743. You can also find it online at [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org). This comprehensive resource includes samples and templates of a press release and a media advisory to help you create your own.

## First Things First: Deciding on a Special Event

### What Can an Event Do for My Center?

Think of a special event as a building block for your center. Events can build resources, visibility, participation, productivity, and morale. As you think about the type of event to hold, consider the following benefits that an event can bring your center.

Events can:

- Build interest and excitement among residents about your center's programs and increase participation;
- Educate community leaders about your center's accomplishments and foster partnerships with them;
- Attract local partners and publicly thank those already involved;
- Educate the community about your center and its programs; and
- Affirm your center's place within the family of Neighborhood Networks centers.

### What Is the Occasion?

Opportunities to hold events are limited only by one's imagination. Events are usually planned to celebrate or commemorate an occasion—a milestone, an important visit, or a much-deserved thank you.

Examples include:

- A grand opening or a center anniversary;
- Milestones such as the 100th participant or graduate of a program;
- A public thank-you celebration for partners;

- A visit by an important public official or dignitary; and
- Showcasing programs.

### Reach Out for Advice

Whether you are thinking about holding an event or are knee-deep in planning, there are many people you can consult for advice and guidance. Some resources are right at your fingertips: your own staff, program participants, and partners. Also, what could be a better source of information than other Neighborhood Networks centers?

Centers across the country have held many different types of events and can provide sound advice about what works and what does not. Find out what kind of events have been held and how centers have made them work.

#### **Strength in Numbers: Collaborative Events**

Think about holding a joint event with another Neighborhood Networks center or centers in your community. This is a great way to spotlight all that centers are doing in the community while sharing the burden of event planning, logistics, and cost.

To locate a center that can help you, call the Neighborhood Networks Information Center toll-free at (888) 312-2743 or visit [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org).

Neighborhood Networks coordinators and other staff at local HUD Field Offices are a great resource for help in planning events and offering suggestions for activities and advice on reaching partners and community stakeholders. They are also familiar with successful events that other centers have held. If you do not know how to contact the local HUD Field Office, call the Neighborhood Networks Information Center.

Other good sources of information include the Neighborhood Networks Web site and *NNewsline*, the bimonthly newsletter about and for Neighborhood Networks centers.

## Event Ideas

This section offers a variety of ideas for events. Remember, an event does not have to be complicated to be successful. A little planning and a few volunteers can go a long way toward helping. The event planning process can have its own rewards—people who are a part of a successful event-planning team may be energized to make a long-term commitment to your center.

The ideas listed here are only suggestions. You know best what will work in your neighborhood and with the resources you have at hand.

If the center is small, or if there are a number of centers in the community, think about joining forces to showcase the work of all area centers.

Pick one center to host the event—media are more likely to attend an event at one location—and bring residents and programs to the host center for a demonstration. That day, it might be fun to enable open house guests to e-mail the other centers in the community.

- **Open your doors.** Invite residents and community partners to your center and show off a program while it is in action. Have a mock demonstration, provide refreshments, and mingle. As an incentive for residents to attend, ask a local partner to donate a giveaway, such as T-shirts or pizza, in return for some great publicity. Invite the media and your partners. Offer the media a chance to speak with residents and partners alike.
- **Celebrate a grand opening or an anniversary.** These may be the most typical Neighborhood Networks center special events. Like open houses, they are excellent opportunities to invite residents, partners, and community leaders to share in your success. For indepth information on media relations for a grand opening or anniversary, see the companion guide to this document, *Media*

## *Relations Guide for Neighborhood Networks Grand Openings.*

- **Hold a health fair or community festival.** Hold a fun event with a serious theme, such as helping residents learn about access to healthcare. A number of Neighborhood Networks centers around the country have held fairs and helped residents sign up for their state's Children's Health Insurance Program, which provides health insurance for children of qualified families. If you are equipped for this, hold an event to sign up residents. If you have not already partnered with a neighborhood healthcare facility, now is a great time to forge a partnership. Invite representatives to the center and provide health information and screenings. That will provide a great service to residents and publicity for you and your partner.

You can also make the event about much more than health. Invite local agencies that provide support services for residents, such as transportation, education, and job training, to come to your center for a day of fun and education.

Make the day fun by creating a fair-like atmosphere with games, giveaways, and snacks. As with an open house, area businesses are usually happy to help in return for some acknowledgment and publicity. Of course, health fairs also make great media opportunities.

- **Acknowledge your partners.** Hold a partner recognition ceremony, such as a breakfast, luncheon, or dinner, to publicly thank them. Invite community leaders and potential partners as well. Ask residents to participate by sharing their experiences using the center. To acknowledge support, consider presenting a partner or partners with a certificate of appreciation.
- **Spruce up your center.** Hold a painting party to give your center a new lease on life. Build some new shelves. Brighten up

a classroom that looks dull. Convert a storage room into a cozy study space. Invite residents for a day of work and fun that also builds pride in your center.

- **Sponsor a forum.** This can be a serious event that creates important dialogue while also raising your center's visibility. Consider hosting a forum at your center to discuss an issue that is important to the neighborhood or the larger community. Invite a panel that reflects different sides of the issue, and publicize the event through neighborhood flyers and media outreach. Invite media to cover the event.
- **Hold a contest.** Contests generate excitement and attention. This is a wonderful way to increase program participation. Contest ideas can be general in nature, such as those listed here, or tied to performance in center programs.

Ideas for contests include:

- Ask residents of all ages to write a slogan, cheer, or song that celebrates your center's work. Hold a talent contest where everyone performs his or her entry. Give prizes for the funniest, most clever, and best overall performance.
- Hold an essay contest (100 words maximum) asking center participants of all ages to write about the most interesting thing they have learned or done at their center.
- Ask children to draw a picture with a caption that celebrates your center's work. Hold an opening to display all of the pictures and ask each child to talk about his/her work. Award ribbons to all participants.
- Reward children who study after school at the center for the most days during a 2-week period.
- Let senior residents take a virtual trip around the world! Whoever sends an e-

mail to the relative or friend living farthest away wins the contest.

Each contest should be easy to publicize through a flyer targeting residents.

The flyer should:

- Briefly describe the contest and judging criteria.
- Announce the prizes.
- Include information on when and where awards will be given.
- Explain how to submit entries and include the deadline.

You may want to create a contest entry form that could be distributed with the flyer. If judges are needed, consider asking individuals who are active at the center.

The entry form should be a fill-in-the-blank form with spaces for:

- Name of contest.
- Entrant's name.
- Entrant's address/phone number (and age, for children).
- One-line description of the entry.

Note: Whether or not you use an entry form, make sure to stress that all entrants must put their names on their entries!

## Steps to Planning a Successful Event

Some basic guidelines apply to planning any event. Your event may be large or small, simple or complex, months away or next week. Some steps are more relevant to larger events with a longer planning time; pick and choose what will help you.

First, we have included some basics to think about as you get started, questions to ask yourself, and tips to keep in mind throughout the planning process.

We have also included event-planning timelines with specific steps for executing an event. There are two versions of this list: a quick-steps list for planning events in a 3- or 4-week time span, and a more detailed long-range planning timetable for events that are months away. Both will help you remain organized when you are buried by logistical details. This guide also includes another helpful tool, a media and event checklist.

The steps you will need to take will vary according to the complexity of your event and the time and resources at your disposal.

### **Getting Started: Questions to Ask Yourself**

Answering a few questions up front will help you plan the best event for your needs and resources. You probably will have your own questions to add to the list, but the following questions will get you started.

- ❑ Is the goal of the event to attract new partners? Draw more participants to your center programs? Get on the evening news? Answers to these questions will help shape your event.
- ❑ Will the event appeal to those you want to attract? Will the date, time, and location work for everyone?
- ❑ Do you have time to successfully produce the event you want? Make sure to develop a detailed to-do list and budget early. Is it possible to recruit sponsors to donate goods and services?
- ❑ Is weather a factor? Do you have an alternative plan, including a rain date or indoor location?
- ❑ If you want to attract media, do you have a story to tell? Profiles of residents who have benefited from your center make appealing stories. An event is also a great way to

publicly thank and acknowledge partners and supporters.

- ❑ Who will be the center's spokesperson? If media will be there, it is important to decide beforehand who will be the point person to talk with them.
- ❑ Do you want or need entertainment at the event?
- ❑ Do you want giveaways? These can be great mementos that leave a lasting impression, and they do not have to be too expensive. A few ideas include: balloons, buttons, water bottles, T-shirts, mouse pads, and mugs. Consider asking a partner or local vendor to donate or help underwrite giveaways and find a way to publicly thank them.
- ❑ Do you need food vendors? Sanitation facilities? A cleanup crew?
- ❑ Is your event location fully accessible to people with disabilities?
- ❑ Do you need an interpreter for hearing-impaired persons or those who speak another language?

### **Getting Started: Key Planning Tips**

It is never too early to start planning. As planning, and as you proceed:

- ❑ Make sure goals are realistic and specific enough for what you are trying to accomplish. Goals like "raise visibility" and "get residents excited about the center's program" are fairly general. You may want to be more specific, such as setting a goal to sign up 50 residents.
- ❑ Develop a realistic budget and timeline, and make sure the event is on a scale to match.
- ❑ Depending on timing, the event team can be an ad-hoc team of two or three volunteers or something more formal. Give all team members specific

assignments, such as publicity, refreshments, or invitations, and deadlines. This will help everyone remain on track and make things easier for them.

- ❑ For bigger events, consider partnering with a local radio or television station. A media partner can offer expertise and may provide in-kind publicity. Good planning committee candidates include advertising and public relations professionals, special-events planners, journalism professors and graduate students, graphic designers, and printers.
- ❑ If possible, find a way to involve local partners and supporters, and publicly thank them for their help. Involve all partners in the planning process.

### **Ways to Thank Partners and Acknowledge Their Contributions**

- ❑ Present a certificate of appreciation.
- ❑ Identify them by name on flyers, posters, and other materials that will be distributed to the public.
- ❑ Give your publicity plan the attention it needs. Whether you are using under-the-door flyers or planning a full-blown media campaign, make sure you reach those you need to reach with clear, timely information. Ask your HUD Neighborhood Networks coordinator for advice. An event only works if it reaches the people you want to reach.
- ❑ If there is a way to involve the entire community, now is the time. You never know who you will reach—children, senior citizens, churches and schools, youth groups, block clubs, and neighborhood associations. Look for ways to get everyone excited about the event.
- ❑ Right before the event, do a walk-through. Anticipate any problems and devise solutions.
- ❑ After the event, remember to send thank-you notes or award certificates to all participants.

- ❑ Finally, conduct a formal or informal evaluation of the event. Did you achieve your goals? What lessons did you learn? How can you improve your next event?

### **Planning: A Quick-Steps List**

For a successful quick turnaround event (3 to 4 weeks), include the following key planning elements. For both short-term and long-term planning, see the Media and Event Checklist section, which is another helpful tool when you are in the middle of myriad logistical details.

- ❑ First, round up a few good helpers.
- ❑ Make sure you are clear on what will mean success for your event and keep that goal in mind throughout your planning.
- ❑ Make a detailed to-do list, complete with deadlines. Set a budget. If you need donations from local merchants or partners, now is the time to ask.
- ❑ If you will have speakers or important event participants, call to invite them as soon as possible. Follow up with a written invitation. Find out if they will need support materials, such as an easel, or audiovisual equipment.
- ❑ Decide whom you want to invite and how you will get the word out. Think about a variety of media. For neighborhood events, great tools include flyers placed under doors and posted in high-traffic areas, information in local newspapers, and contacting key community leaders.
- ❑ Arrange the following early on for logistics—podium, microphones, seating, decorations, refreshments, and signs. If the location is hard to find, prepare signs that direct people to the site.
- ❑ If the event is outdoors, have a rain plan. Also, make sure the location is fully accessible to people with disabilities.

- ❑ Decide if you want to invite media. Media coverage before the fact can build attendance if you are trying to attract lots of people to an event such as a community fair. At a minimum, invite top local and regional newspapers, and television and radio stations. Send a media advisory a few days before, and a news release the day of the event (see The Quick and Easy Publicity Campaign section).
- ❑ Print and distribute an event program that includes a schedule and lists speakers and their titles. Double check the spelling of names.
- ❑ If you can, follow up with important media after the event, both those who attended and those who did not. There may still be an opportunity for coverage at a later date.
- ❑ Finally, do not forget the thank-you notes.

### **Planning: A Long-Range Planning Timetable**

This is an ideal timeline for a large event that is planned months in advance. Please use it as a guide to help assemble a plan that meets your needs. For more help, see the Media and Event Checklist section.

Five months before the event:

- ❑ Identify an event committee and assign roles that include development of publicity materials, site logistics, and media contact.
- ❑ Hold the first committee meeting to set date, time, and goals for the event.
- ❑ Set event plan and timetable.

Four months before the event:

- ❑ Event committee meets twice each month to continue planning.
- ❑ Find and confirm location. Invite key speakers and local celebrities/notables.
- ❑ Prepare or update the center's media list.

- ❑ Prepare an invitation list.

Three months before the event:

- ❑ Begin to recruit volunteers by speaking to community groups, clubs, and organizations; solicit support such as funds, materials, and volunteers.
- ❑ Arrange for podium, seating, and decorations.
- ❑ Secure sound, lighting, and staging needs.
- ❑ Draft flyer/invitation.
- ❑ Print/mail "Save the Date" postcard or flyer.
- ❑ Recruit entertainment.

Two months before the event:

- ❑ Print/mail flyer/invitation.
- ❑ Prepare public service announcements (PSAs), posters, banners, and other event materials such as logo and letterhead.
- ❑ Kick off advance publicity activities. Things you can do at this point include: PSAs, paid advertising, and submission of op-ed articles or letters to the editor to local newspapers.

Six weeks before the event:

- ❑ Develop a specific event schedule to include length of event, entertainment, and when and for how long speakers will speak.
- ❑ Order event mementos, such as buttons, banners, key rings, and T-shirts.

Four weeks before the event:

- ❑ Reconfirm all participants.
- ❑ Obtain speaker biographies.

- ☐ Conduct committee walkthrough of site.
- ☐ Create charts and visual aids.
- ☐ Send event information to the media to list in their community calendars.

Two to three weeks before the event:

- ☐ Hold volunteer orientation session.
- ☐ Identify staff/volunteers to serve as technical sources for reporters.
- ☐ Arrange for event photographer.
- ☐ Develop certificates for participants.
- ☐ Select contents for press packet.

Eight to nine days before the event:

- ☐ Complete media advisory.
- ☐ Write news release.

Six or seven days before the event:

- ☐ Fax or mail media advisory.
- ☐ Call media to confirm receipt and pitch story.
- ☐ Draft talking points for speakers.
- ☐ Call event participants to check needs.
- ☐ Make followup calls to invitees.
- ☐ Hang banners and posters.

(See sample materials at the end of this guide.)

Four to five days before the event:

- ☐ Complete and fax news release.
- ☐ Call local Associated Press (AP) office to put the event on the daybook calendar.

- ☐ Develop a script and send it to the master of ceremonies and participants.
- ☐ Prepare event agenda.
- ☐ Prepare press packets.

(See the *Media Relations Guide for Neighborhood Networks Grand Openings* for more information.)

Day of the event:

- ☐ Arrive at the site 2 hours in advance to make sure everything is in place and works, including microphone, sound system, and other equipment. Setup for the event can also happen the evening before.
- ☐ Make last-minute followup media calls.
- ☐ Make sure speakers have their talking points.
- ☐ Greet reporters as they arrive, distribute press packets, and introduce media to speakers, residents, and partners they may wish to interview.

After the event:

- ☐ Call journalists who attended to see if they need additional information.
- ☐ Send journalists any materials promised.
- ☐ Monitor media coverage.
- ☐ Respond to media inquiries.
- ☐ Follow up with potential new partners, participants, or anyone else who needs additional information.
- ☐ Send thank-you notes to all.



## The Quick and Easy Publicity Campaign

### The Value of Publicity

It is not an overstatement to say that publicity can make or break an event. Even the best-planned event will not be successful unless it is publicized. Reaching those different audiences—residents, community leaders, partners, and others—may take some ingenuity, but the results can reap long-term benefits.

You can reach:

- ❑ Residents to build center participation;
- ❑ Partners to tell them about the center's successes and their smart investment in supporting it; and
- ❑ Potential partners, and cultivate their support.

Different publicity tactics to consider include:

- ❑ Create a flyer that promotes the event and provides pertinent information. Distribute it to residents and display it at visible locations;
- ❑ Arrange to post materials such as posters, brochures, and flyers promoting your center and the event at a local library, mall, or other public place;
- ❑ Write a news release or media advisory for your local newspaper and radio and television stations. Submit it to your local HUD Field Office for review (see sample later in this guide);
- ❑ Ask local print and broadcast media to run PSAs; and
- ❑ Write letters to the editor or op-ed articles to submit to local print media.

### Five Easy Steps to Media Coverage

Generating media coverage for an event is easier than you think. This easy five-step process walks you through how to inform the media about an event. Consult the *Media Relations Guide* for

*Neighborhood Networks Grand Openings* for comprehensive information.

- ❑ **Step one.** Develop a media contact list that includes local radio and television stations, and daily and weekly newspapers. You do not need a complicated database or a media directory, you just need some names and telephone numbers of local media organizations and contacts. You can find these in the phone book or on the Internet.
  - Identify all local media sources, including radio, cable, and television stations, weekly and daily newspapers, magazines, and wire services such as AP and United Press International (UPI). Call for contact information for their news department. The telephone book and the Internet will help.
  - Your local HUD Field Office may have a list already available, or you can call the Neighborhood Networks Information Center.
- ❑ **Step two.** Prepare a media advisory or news release. Media advisories and news releases are valued by reporters who seek story ideas.

See the sample advisory provided later in this guide. To generate media interest, communicate the news of the event in a way that makes it newsworthy and interesting to reporters and the readers, viewers, or listeners they serve. Remember, resources and programs that are doing something worthwhile for the community are more important to local media.

- ❑ **Step three.** Fax the media advisory to the contacts on the distribution list. Sending a fax is the fastest, most effective way to send information to contacts. If there is time, follow up the distribution of press materials with phone calls. Do not beg or demand that a reporter attend; just take a minute or two to make your pitch.

Remember to include a fax cover sheet with contact name, title, news organization and fax number, your own name and number, and a brief description of the event. This presents another opportunity to sell your story. Use a one-line sentence that highlights why an editor or reporter should attend the event.

- ❑ **Step four.** Respond promptly to any media inquiries about the center or about the information you provided.
- ❑ **Step five.** Assemble and distribute press kits. A press kit can inform the media about the center and why the event is important. Good items to include are:
  - The press release about the event.
  - The Neighborhood Networks brochure.\*\*
  - Neighborhood Networks fact sheets.\*\*

- Copies of articles that have been written about the center.
- Neighborhood Networks and center newsletters.\*\*
- Copies of certificates of commendation or other honors the center has received.
- Biographies of speakers appearing at the celebration and profiles of the organizations they represent.
- A Neighborhood Networks cover folder\*\*

\*\*Items marked with asterisks are available from the Neighborhood Networks Information Center.

## Media and Event Checklist

This checklist will help you execute a successful special event.

**Event:**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Location:**

### Participants

- ☐ Speakers contacted/confirmed.
- ☐ Master of ceremonies confirmed.
- ☐ Speeches/talking points drafted.
- ☐ Participants briefed.
- ☐ Speaker biographies received/developed.
- ☐ Event packets prepared.
- ☐ Agenda drafted.

### Materials

- ☐ Media advisory written/approved.
- ☐ Press release written/approved.
- ☐ Invitations written.
- ☐ Charts, graphics, and other visuals created.
- ☐ Press packets prepared.
- ☐ Flyers developed/distributed.

### Site

- ☐ Staging in place (platforms, chairs, and so on).
- ☐ Light and sound okay (electrical outlets and so on).
- ☐ Podium/lectern in place.
- ☐ Parking accessible, including accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- ☐ Multiple boxes in place (for television and radio speaker systems).
- ☐ Electrical outlets checked.
- ☐ Press sign-in table in place.
- ☐ Literature/handout table stocked.

- ☐ Area/tables for partners/local organizations in place.
- ☐ Refreshments ready.
- ☐ Entertainment arrangements complete.

### Media/outreach

- ☐ Invitations mailed.
- ☐ Spokesperson chosen.
- ☐ Media advisory sent.
- ☐ First followup calls to press made.
- ☐ First followup calls to invitees made.
- ☐ Pitch calls to key press completed.
- ☐ Press release sent.
- ☐ Press packets assembled.
- ☐ Press materials distributed.
- ☐ Speaker/participant thank-you letters developed and distributed.

## Sample Documents

The samples contained in this guide are here for guidance only. Customize them to your own needs. For more sample news releases and brochure ideas, see the electronic templates on the Neighborhood Networks Web site at [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org) or consult the *Media Relations Guide for Neighborhood Networks Grand Openings*.



## Sample News Release

### For Immediate Release

Date

### Contact

Neighborhood Networks Center Coordinator

\_\_\_\_ NEW NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS CENTERS TO OPEN AT \_\_\_\_

### HUD Welfare-to-Work Program Provides Computer Training, Online Opportunity

**City (CAPS), State**—Until now, many of the more than \_\_\_\_ residents at \_\_\_\_ housing developments never had daily access to computer job training and the information superhighway. But new Neighborhood Networks centers equipped with \_\_\_\_ computers will officially open on \_\_\_\_, providing \_\_\_\_ residents with onsite access to technology and economic opportunity. \_\_\_\_ computers at the center will have Internet access.

The \_\_\_\_ new centers are part of more than 1,000 Neighborhood Network centers that have opened nationwide, including # \_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_. Launched by HUD in September 1995, Neighborhood Networks is a community-based program that provides residents of HUD insured and assisted housing with on-site access to computer technology, resources, and job-training skills as a vehicle to self-sufficiency.

Neighborhood Networks centers nationwide offer multifamily housing residents a variety of resources such as computer training, Internet access, job-readiness support, microenterprise development, GED certification, healthcare and social services, adult education classes, and youth services.

Neighborhood Network Centers, which receive only minimal federal funding and rely primarily on local support, develop strong partnerships with local businesses, nonprofits, education institutions, faith-based organizations, foundations, hospitals, and federal, county, and state governments. ***Insert partner information and/or quote.***

As a result of training received in centers nationwide, residents of government-assisted housing have entered the job market in clerical, data management, accounting, paralegal, and property management positions, among others.

# # #

Additional information is available from the HUD Neighborhood Networks Web site at [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org) or by calling the Neighborhood Networks Information Center toll-free at (888) 312-2743.



## Sample Media Advisory

### For Immediate Release

Date

### Contact:

Neighborhood Networks Center Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_ NEW NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS CENTERS TO OPEN AT \_\_\_\_\_

### HUD Welfare-to-Work Program Provides Computer Training, Online Opportunity

What:

Where:

When:

Who:

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**City (CAPS), State**—*Lead paragraph*

The new center is part of more than 1,000 Neighborhood Network centers that have opened nationwide, including # in \_\_\_\_\_. Launched by HUD in September 1995, Neighborhood Networks is a community-based program that provides residents of HUD insured and assisted housing with onsite access to computer technology, resources, and job-training skills as a vehicle to self-sufficiency.

# #

Additional information is available from the HUD Neighborhood Networks Web site at [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org) or by calling the Neighborhood Networks Information Center toll-free at (888) 312-2743.

## **Sample Public Service Announcements (PSAs)**

Local radio stations may be willing to promote your event by airing a public service announcements. Contact stations and ask.

Please edit the sample PSAs below to reflect your needs.

(10 seconds)

October 1, join [insert the name of your center] for our Neighborhood Health Fair at [address of center]. Call [name of contact person] at [phone number] and learn how you can participate.

(20 seconds or 30 seconds, depending on amount of detail)

On October 1, join [name of center] at [address of center] for a [type of event, e.g., picnic, health fair, etc].

You will be able to [what participants can do at the event]. Call [name of contact person] at [phone number] and learn how you can participate.

## Sample Proclamation

A proclamation is usually presented by a local public official to the Neighborhood Networks center recognition of a center milestone or event.

To request a proclamation, a center representative should contact the office of the local public official, describe the event or occasion, and ask if a proclamation can be presented by the public official to the center. Proclamations usually are presented at public events.

To assist the office with preparation of the proclamation, a center should provide basic but essential information about the event, the center, and HUD's Neighborhood Networks. The information that is provided usually appears very formally, using "Whereas" clauses as shown below.

The following general language can help with preparing information about a center for a proclamation.

**Whereas** [insert the name of the center] [insert nature of event, such as marking the celebration of the center's fifth anniversary].

**Whereas** [insert the name of the center] has provided essential programs and services, such as [insert], which enable residents to move toward self-sufficiency. . .

**Whereas** [name of center] is part of a family of more than 1,000 Neighborhood Networks centers in 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. . .

**Whereas** Neighborhood Networks, launched in 1995, is a community-based program created by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Through innovative public and private partnerships, Neighborhood Networks establishes multiservice community learning centers that bring digital opportunity to residents of all ages living in public and assisted housing. . .

**Whereas** Neighborhood Networks centers provide many programs and services to residents, including employment training and opportunities, computer access and training, educational opportunities, healthcare services, and social services. . .



## Sample Event Invitation

An invitation should include:

- Center name.
- Contact information.
- Description of the nature of the event.
- Event specifics (date, time, and location).

**Come Celebrate**

### **With the (Insert Neighborhood Networks Center Name) Open House**



When: (Insert date and time)

Where: (Insert Neighborhood Networks center name)

Address and telephone number: (Insert address and telephone)

**Come help us celebrate our success and build our future!**

Who is invited: residents, young people, seniors, community leaders, social service providers, elected officials, and surrounding community residents.

(Insert Neighborhood Networks center name and address)

For more information, contact:

Phone ( ) \_ \_ \_ - \_ \_ \_ \_

Refreshments provided.

Do not forget important information!



# ***Neighborhood Networks Information***

For more information about Neighborhood Networks, visit the Neighborhood Networks Web site at [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org), contact the Neighborhood Networks information center toll-free at (888) 312-2743 or TTY at (800) 483-2209. The Web site contains valuable information for centers, including:

## **Databases**

- **Centers**  
Information about operating centers and those in planning stages. Neighborhood Networks centers across the United States are listed geographically by state.
- **News**  
Articles, press releases, success stories, and grand openings relevant to Neighborhood Networks.
- **Properties**  
Information about Neighborhood Networks properties, listed geographically by state.
- **Resources**  
Information about funding, technical assistance, publications, and Web site resources.

## **Lists**

- **Conferences**  
Calendar of conferences and training events.
- **Consortia**  
List of Neighborhood Networks consortia.
- **Coordinators**  
List of Neighborhood Networks coordinators.

- **Resident Associations**  
List of Neighborhood Networks properties with active resident associations.
- **Senior Properties**  
List of senior properties with operational Neighborhood Networks centers.

## **Online Networking**

Talk with Neighborhood Networks staff and stakeholders via online networking.

## **Publications**

- **Fact sheets.** Fact sheets are one-page summaries of various topics relevant to the operations of Neighborhood Network centers. Fact sheets that are currently available include an overview of the initiative, telehealth programs, health information, health partnerships, childcare, transportation, seniors, and community improvements at Neighborhood Network centers.
- ***Network News*** (current and past issues). A quarterly newsletter that highlights national achievements for a wide audience including partners and the public.
- ***NNewsline*** (current and past issues). A quarterly newsletter that highlights topics of interest to Neighborhood Networks centers and coordinators.









